



Gyro Burgers

photos by Katherine Louis Boucher

Mediterranean BBQ

ENJOY HEALTHY AND DELISH FARE ALL SEASON LONG

By Katherine Louis Boucher

Summer has just arrived and that means one thing: almost time to fire up those barbeques!

I've been craving Mediterranean food during this pregnancy and it was exactly what I was thinking about when I started planning my recipes for this issue! What goes better with sunshine and backyard BBQs than the fresh and seasonal flavors of Greece, served with a chilly glass of sauvignon blanc? I can't think of anything better. Bon Appetit!

Gyro Burgers with Roasted Tomato Tzatziki

How on earth can I speak of my Greek heritage without paying some sort of homage to the famous gyro sandwich?! Pronounced "Yee-row" phonetically, it is what many people associate Greek food with. I have created a bit of a twist on the original but kept the spices and flavor profiles that everyone loves so much. I finish these off with a dollop of super flavorful roasted tomato tzatziki that is the perfect touch. Opa!

1 lb. ground chuck (20% fat)
1 lb. ground lamb
1 small sweet onion, grated
1 tablespoon garlic, grated
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon dried cumin
1 teaspoon dried marjoram
1 teaspoon dried coriander

Salt and freshly cracked pepper to taste
6 medium sized buns, halved and toasted
Butter lettuce
Sliced red onions

Place ground beef and lamb in a large bowl and season with next 7 ingredients. Mix with hands to incorporate ingredients very well. Place mixture in the refrigerator for one hour.

Roasted Tomato Tzatziki

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1-pint grape tomatoes, cut in half
2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
2 cups whole milk Greek yogurt
1 Persian cucumber, grated and drained of excess water
1 small garlic clove, grated
1 tablespoon tomato paste
Salt and freshly-cracked pepper to taste

In a small sauté pan, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add tomatoes, season with salt and pepper and cook until beginning to wilt and caramelize, about 10 minutes. Add garlic and cook for an additional 3-4 minutes, until it starts to brown. Remove from heat and set aside to cool.

In a small bowl, add Greek yogurt, cucumbers, garlic, tomato paste and roasted tomato mixture. Gently stir to combine and season with salt and pepper.

Preheat grill to medium-high heat. Remove meat mixture from refrigerator and form into 6 patties. Season liberally with salt and pepper. Grill patties to medium, approximately 5 minutes per side, or to desired doneness.

Top each bun with butter lettuce and sliced red onions, gyro burger and finish with a large dollop of roasted tomato tzatziki.



Roasted Tomato Tzatziki

Herbed Feta Dip with Mediterranean Tomato Bruschetta

There are many different types of feta cheese to try with this recipe. Greek feta is the strongest and firmest, while Bulgarian and French feta take on a milder, creamier flavor as well as a softer texture. Though I love them all, I tend to use the milder varieties most.

Bruschetta. Quite possibly one of the best summer and early fall treats there is. Delicious on roasted crostini drizzled with olive oil, of course, but equally fab on top of fish or chicken, grilled zucchini or even steamed lentils! I enjoy picking a variety of fresh herbs from the garden to liven up the classic basil-only bruschetta. To take it one step further, I make a garlicky, zesty herbed feta dip to smear on the crostini before topping it with a dollop of bruschetta. Eat and repeat. You're welcome.

Serves 12

10 oz. feta cheese
8 oz. cream cheese, softened
1 large garlic clove, roughly chopped
1 teaspoon fresh oregano plus an additional pinch, roughly chopped
1 teaspoon fresh thyme plus an additional pinch, roughly chopped
1 teaspoon fresh mint plus an additional pinch, roughly chopped

1 tablespoon scallions, roughly chopped
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons fresh squeezed lemon juice
1 cup chopped cherry tomatoes
1 small shallot, minced
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tablespoons toasted pine nuts

Combine feta cheese, cream cheese, garlic and herbs in food processor and pulse until combined. Slowly add 2/3 cup of olive oil and lemon juice and blend until smooth. In a small mixing bowl, add tomatoes, shallots, additional pinch of oregano and thyme, 1 tablespoon olive oil, salt and pepper. Gently toss together. Spoon feta dip into a serving bowl and top with tomato mixture. Garnish with toasted pine nuts and serve with toasted crostini.

Greek Spice Blend

I'm 100% Greek in ethnicity. So, my go-to spice blend reflects the herbs and spices that I grew up eating in some of my most favorite dishes. I use it on chicken, steak, lamb, shrimp, salmon, turkey, vegetables and everything in between.

2 teaspoons dried minced onion
2 teaspoons dried minced garlic
3 teaspoons dried Greek or Mediterranean oregano
1/4 teaspoon red chili flake
1/4 teaspoon dried orange peel
1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon kosher or sea salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly-cracked pepper

Whisk all ingredients up in a little bowl or jar and season away!

Greek Spice Blend



Herbed Feta Dip with Mediterranean Tomato Bruschetta



Grilled Nectarine and Red Onion Salad with Buttermilk Gorgonzola Dressing & Bacon

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Sweet, juicy nectarines pair delectably with the smoky and salty flavor of freshly-roasted, thick-cut bacon. When you then add grilled onions, arugula and a creamy gorgonzola vinaigrette, you've got yourself a hearty first course salad or light Summer dinner and crowd pleaser.

4 large nectarines, pitted and cut into wedges	¼ cup mayo
1 large red onion, cut into 1-inch rings	½ cup sour cream
1 lb. thick sliced bacon, roasted at 400° for 15 minutes, until crispy	¼ cup buttermilk
2 cups arugula	2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
	2 tablespoon chives, chopped
	1 garlic clove, minced
	⅔ cup gorgonzola cheese, crumbled
	Salt and freshly-cracked pepper to taste

Heat grill to medium-high heat and brush with grape seed oil. Season nectarines and onions with salt and pepper and grill until soft, approximately 3-4 minutes per side. Remove from grill and set aside.

Buttermilk Blue Cheese Dressing

In a small bowl, whisk mayo, sour cream, buttermilk and red wine vinegar together. Add chives and garlic and stir to combine. Gently fold in the crumbled gorgonzola cheese and season with salt and pepper. Refrigerate dressing for at least one hour, to allow flavors to come together.

In a large bowl, toss arugula with grilled peaches, onions and bacon. Season with salt and pepper. Drizzle blue cheese dressing on top of salad and serve.

Lemon-Pink Peppercorn Spice Blend

I am a huge citrus fan. I love all types and use one or more, almost daily in cooking. This combination of pink peppercorns, dried lemon, lime and orange zests and little turmeric to bump up the anti-inflammatory properties, is zesty and spicy and so super good. Try it on chicken or beef... or melt some butter in a pan and stir in a teaspoon or so of the spice blend to finish your seafood off to perfection!

1 tablespoon pink peppercorns, roughly crushed with the back of a wooden spoon
2 teaspoons dried lemon
1 teaspoon dried orange
1 teaspoon dried minced onion
1 teaspoon dried minced garlic
1 teaspoon dried thyme
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon kosher salt

Whisk all spices together in a small bowl or jar and enjoy!



Lemon-Pink Peppercorn Spice Blend